

Message Text

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47

ACTION EUR-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4894

INFO AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT PFOR UR

SUBJECT: PODGORNIY ON ECONOMIC REFORM

1. SPEAKING AT CEREMONIES IN RIGA ON DECEMBER 26 AT WHICH HE AWARDED ORDER OF FRIENDSHIP AMONG PEOPLE TO LATVIAN REPUBLIC, CHAIRMAN OF PRESIDUM OF SUPREME SOVIET PODGORNIY ECHOED BREZHNEV'S MESSAGE TO RECENT CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM, AS SUMMARIZED IN PRAVDA LEADER DECEMBER 16, THAT CONTINUING GROWTH OF NATIONAL ECONOMY REQUIRES REVISIONS IN ECONOMIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT.

2. ACCORDING TO SUMMARY OF SPEECH WHICH APPEARED IN PRAVDA DECEMBER 27, PODGORNIY STRESSED "THE EXCEPTIONAL ATTENTION" PLENUM GAVE TO IMPROVING EFFECTIVENESS OF ECONOMIC SECTOR. HOWEVER, PODGORNIY IMMEDIATELY POINTED OUT THAT DISCUSSIONS DID NOT FORESHADOW "ANY RADICAL RESTRUCTURING OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF MANAGEMENT." HE OBSERVED THAT THE PRESENT BRANCH PRINCIPLE HAD STOOD THE TEST OF TIME. HIS FURTHER REMARKS SPELLED OUT WHAT SEEMED A RELATIVELY ORTHODOX VIEW OF IMPROVING MANAGEMENT.

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3. COMMENT: PODGORNIY'S REMARKS, RULING OUT RADICALISM,

COMING SO QUICKLY ON HEELS OF PLENUM, SUGGEST THAT SOME FEARS
HAVE ALREADY BEEN EXPRESSED IN INFLUENTIAL CIRCLES ABOUT
NATURE OF PROPOSED REFORMS. IT IS DIFFICULT TO JUDGE,
FROM AVAILABLE EVIDENCE, HOW FAR BREZHNEV HIMSELF WENT
IN ADVOCATING REFORM. THE DECEMBER 16 PRAVDA LEADER
INDICATED THAT HE CALLED FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF "A
SINGLE COMPREHENSIVE SET OF MEASURES" DESIGNED TO IMPROVE
"THE ENTIRE ECONOMIC MECHANISM."SOMMERLATTE

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